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SOMETHING ABOUT SIDEWALKS

Sometimes walking down a sidewalk leads you to the end of the sidewalk, to the place where grass begins. You pause in confusion. The grass has no path to follow. It stretches away in all directions, smooth and green and featureless. Where do you go? The sidewalk is so obliging, so helpful. It always leads you along so you can just follow it, not worrying about what to do, where to go next. A sidewalk takes all the risk out of life, all the thought. It makes life easy.

That's why everybody likes sidewalks. There's no demands.

MY TELEVISION AND I

My television and I are no longer friends.

It's sad to see such a close relationship break up, but it happens all the time. Friends begin to have different interests, different approaches to life. My television and I once had so much in common. Loud voices. Flash and pizzazz. A love of garish pictures and constant movement. These are the common bonds we shared. Now I find that when the television talks, I don't listen. And when I do pay attention, the television bores me. No matter how many buttons I press, the television conversations have little to do with my life, with the things I find to be most important. And the pictures it shows me are of people I don't know, have never known, will never know.

Why should I pay attention to that?

So I spend my nights alone now. I read a book, or I look out a window. Sometimes I hum to myself or do a crossword puzzle. The nights can be so long.

My television and I are no longer friends.

PERIOD PIECE

I put my plastic card in the slot and punched in my Secret Number. There was a whirring sound and letters appeared. Hello, said the letters. Do you want to make a withdrawal? I pushed the yes button. From savings or checking? I pressed the savings button and a new sentence appeared. Enter the amount, it read. So I entered the amount. I waited through a complex series of clicking and whirring sounds from deep in the interior of the machine. Then money appeared, one bill at a time, at the bottom of a plastic hole. I scooped out the money and put it in my wallet. Do you wish another transaction? No, I pressed. More whirring sounds. Then my plastic card reappeared, like a tongue sticking out at me, along with a slip of white paper, a little souvenir of my visit.

This all may seem mundane to you, but a hundred years from now it will be so quaint, so charmingly old-fashioned, so typical of the period.

— Thomas Wiloch

Canton MI

STAIRWAY

I think there is downgrade
I think there is downstairs
I think there is upgrade
I think there is upstairs
I think there is the upperworld
I think there is the underworld
I think there is a soldier on the stairway
I think there is a stairway amongst the stars